

Lake Placid Video  
Barbara Kristaponis

**Statement Barbara Kristaponis**

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Workshops 1975

**Barbara Kristaponis Video Artist**

For twenty years, I ate, slept, thought, dreamt, swam, debated, worked video. There was my own video work that I loved and labored over. And the work to get this work done: I wrote grants, bartered my lighting skills for one inch edits, schlepped for independent filmmakers in return for use of a Nagra, studied lighting and TV engineering in Maine, freelanced as lighting camerawoman, editor, interviewer, line producer, director, and producer for educational and industrial productions. I also organized women's video teaching workshops, taught lighting to college students, ran video editing workshops for union film editors, curated film and video screenings, traveled as camerawoman on two documentaries in Africa, spent hours eliminating shadows from faces with glasses and dusting bald heads, directed a psychiatry-video unit for six years, and lectured on video and psychiatry in the U.S., Canada, and Finland.

My video art work has been partially supported by foundations like NYSCA, NEA Dance, Poets & Writers, W. Alton Jones Foundation, and Julius Eastman Foundation, but mostly funded by myself. Shown in festivals in the States and Canada. My art has never supported me, nor did I expect this really, except for the three golden years, so to speak, in Lake Placid, 1973-1976, where I was actually paid to experiment as an artist with video and form a workshop center for students and the community.

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We were one poet/teacher, Donald Grabau, one poet/cartoonist, Allan King, and myself, photographer/teacher. We'd held other jobs as gas station attendant, shrimp boat hauler, short order cook, waiter, photographer, statistician, hospital aid, and key punch operator, and we were close friends. We were the video people at the Lake Placid Center for Music, Drama, and Art in the Adirondacks under a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts.

Video and poetry, video and dance, video environment, and video documentary. For the first two years we split one salary. We worked seven days a week, most of that time in our big converted garage studio or our summer performance space, Signal Hill, overlooking the lake. We also read voraciously, listened to opera and Aretha Franklin, and analyzed our dreams late into the night. There were donuts, perked coffee, and cigarettes for breakfast, and organic vegetables with brown rice for dinner. We were in pursuit of wonder, celebration, sadness, community, passion, truth. We were political activists, artists, and utopians. And we were intense.

"The Center for Music, Drama and Art in Lake Placid, offered a series of video workshops [by Lake Placid Video] from January through May 1975. Courses included Documentary Video, Video-Poetry, Video: Theatre/Event/Environment, Community Video and a course for high-school students. Instructors included Don Grabau, Barbara Kristaponis and Allan King. Housing was available through the Center."

-from "Video Workshops Offered in Lake Placid," *Afterimage*, December 1974, vol. 2, issue 6.